

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 GENEVA 2321

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, CCD, FR, UR, US

SUBJ: CW DISCUSSIONS WITH FRENCH MARCH 23, 1977

1. SUMMARY: UNITED STATES CW DELEGATION CONDUCTED DAY LONG CONSULTATIONS WITH FRENCH DISARMAMENT AND MILITARY EXPERTS AT QUAI MARCH 23. FRENCH TEAM WAS HEADED BY MISTRAL, ACTING DIRECTOR OF PACTS AND DISARMAMENT AT QUAI AND INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES OF POLICY PLANNING, MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND DIRECTORATE FOR MILITARY PROCUREMENT. FRENCH WERE APPRECIATIVE OF CONSULTATIONS, INTERESTED, WELL INFORMED AND REASONABLY FORTHCOMING. THEY SAID THEY WERE "FAIRLY PLEASED" WITH U.S. APPROACH. HOWEVER, THEY EVINced SKEPTICISM ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF VERIFYING PRODUCTION BAN. THEY WERE SILENT ABOUT THEIR OWN CW OFFENSIVE CAPABILITIES. THERE WAS ALSO DISCUSSION OF OTHER CCD ISSUES. PROVATELY, FRENCH REITERATED THEIR UNEASINESS THAT U.S. AND SOVIETS MAY MOVE TOWARD A CTB. END SUMMARY.

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2. HIGHLIGHTS OF VISITING CW DELEGATION'S CONVERSATIONS WITH FRENCH ON FACTORS RELEVANT TO A POSSIBLE CW ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENT FOLLOW.

3. SOVIET THREAT - FRENCH DISPLAYED INTEREST IN MAGNITUDE OF SOVIET THREAT WHICH THEY REGARDED AS FACTOR UNDERLYING

JUDGMENT ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF PROCEEDING TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS. THEY SEEMED TO REGARD CW THREAT AS SUBSTANTIAL AND DID NOT DISAGREE WITH OUR ESTIMATES OF SOVIET CAPABILITIES. FRENCH ALSO SHOWED INTEREST IN QUESTION OF WHETHER SOVIETS WOULD USE CHEMICALS BEFORE, OR IN CONJUNCTION WITH, NUCLEAR ATTACK. OTHER QUESTIONS CONCERNED SOVIET DOCTRINE FOR CW, SOVIET CAPABILITY TO PRODUCE BINARIES, EVIDENCE OF SOVIET CW POSTURE OUTSIDE EUROPEAN THEATER AND POSSIBILITY THAT SOVIETS MIGHT EXPORT CW PRECURSORS.

4. WESTERN CW POLICY - FRENCH BEGAN THIS PORTION OF DISCUSSION WITH STATEMENT THAT FRANCE ADHERES TO GENEVA PROTOCOL, BUT RESERVES RIGHT TO RETALIATE AND TO DO RESEARCH ON CW AND POSSIBLY TO START PRODUCTION. THEY SAID THEY ARE GIVING HIGHEST PRIORITY TO PROTECTIVE MEASURES. THEY ALSO REPORTED SAME ONGOING RESEARCH ON AGENTS AND DELIVERY MEANS BUT AT NO POINT DID THEY ACKNOWLEDGE OR DENY HAVING AN OFFENSIVE CW CAPABILITY. ON U.S. DOCTRINE, FRENCH SHOWED INTEREST IN COMMAND AND CONTROL ASPECTS, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO REQUIREMENT FOR PRESIDENTIAL RELEASE. THEY THOUGHT THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF A NUCLEAR EXCHANGE A NATO CAPABILITY TO RETALIATE IN KIND TO A CW ATTACK WOULD BE NECESSARY TO FORCE PACT TROOPS INTO A PROTECTIVE POSTURE.

5. POSSIBLE ARMS CONTROL APPROACH - FOLLOWING U.S. PRESENTATION, FRENCH CHAIRMAN MISTRAL, SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD FOLLOWED WITH GREAT INTEREST CW DISCUSSIONS IN CCD BUT WAS SKEPTICAL THAT A SUCCESSFUL AGREEMENT COULD BE ACHIEVED IN THAT FORUM. HE FOUND THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE U.S. PRESENTATION SIMILAR TO
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FRENCH THINKING ON VERIFICATION AND CONTROL. HE SAID FRENCH COULD AGREE IN A GENERAL WAY TO THE PRINCIPLES U.S. HAD ENUNCIATED ON SIMULTANEOUS BAN ON PRODUCTION AND THE DESTRUCTION OF STOCKS. HE SAID FRENCH WERE "FAIRLY PLEASED" WITH THE U.S. APPROACH IN GENERAL. THEY AGREE THAT A CW CONVENTION SHOULD COVER ALL LETHAL AND OTHER HIGHLY TOXIC AGENTS. THEY HAVE NO REAL OPINION ON RIOT CONTROL AGENTS AND HERBICIDES AND HAVE NOT EXAMINED THE QUESTION OF WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE CONTINUATION OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. FRENCH AGREE THAT TRANSFER SHOULD BE PROHIBITED. THE PHASED DESTRUCTION IDEA IS ATTRACTIVE TO THEM BUT AS YET THEY HAVE NO OFFICIAL POSITION.

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6. VERIFICATION IS CHIEF FRENCH CONCERN, MISTRAL SAID. IT IS THE "DECISIVE REASON" WHY FRANCE DID NOT ADHERE TO THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION. QUESTION OF ON-SITE INSPECTION WILL WARRANT VERY CLOSE STUDY. U.S. APPROACH SEEMS SATISFACTORY WITH REGARD TO DESTRUCTION OF STOCKS BUT THERE WILL BE DIFFICULTIES WITH VERIFICATION OF CESSATION OF PRODUCTION. MISTRAL QUESTIONED WHETHER CHALLENGE INSPECTION WOULD REALLY BE ADEQUATE FOR THE CW PROBLEM. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WOULD BE THE PROBLEM OF TIME LAG BETWEEN DETECTION OF SUSPECT ACTIVITY AND INVESTIGATION. U.S. SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER ANOTHER SYSTEM. GOF BELIEVES CW VERIFICATION SHOULD BE BASED ON ON-SITE INSPECTION. VARIOUS VERIFICATION METHODS WERE ALSO DISCUSSED WITH FRENCH MENTIONING STATISTICAL DATA, SATELLITE INFORMATION AND REVIEW OF TECHNICAL LITERATURE AS POSSIBLE AIDS. FRENCH ALSO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SAMPLING OF EFFLUENTS AROUND PLANTS AND WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT HOW TO VERIFY COMPONENTS OF BINARY AGENTS.

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7. CCD ISSUES - FRENCH WERE INTERESTED IN KNOWING HOW LONG WE THOUGHT IT WOULD TAKE FOR THE U.S. AND USSR TO BE IN POSITION TO PRESENT A JOINT INITIATIVE ON CW. U.S. SIDE DEALT WITH THIS QUESTION BY EMPHASIZING THAT WE WOULD NOT BE AUTHORIZED TO DISCUSS THE FORM OF AN AGREEMENT IN THE FORTHCOMING BILATERALS IN GENEVA WITH THE SOVIETS; THE EVENTUAL JOINT INITIATIVE WOULD PROBABLY BE IN THE FORM OF AGREED PRINCIPLES

AND THE SPEED WITH WHICH WE COULD MOVE AHEAD ON THIS MATTER WOULD DEPEND ON COMPLETION OF USG REVIEW AND THE DIFFICULTIES WE ENCOUNTERED WITH THE SOVIETS AS WELL AS THE LEVEL OF DETAIL TO WHICH THEY MIGHT WISH TO GO. AN INITIATIVE BY THE SUMMER CCD SESSION WAS POSSIBLE, ALBEIT OPTIMISTIC. MISTRAL ASKED FOR AND RECEIVED A BRIEF SUMMARY OF WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED AT MDW EXPERTS MEETING IN GENEVA THE PREVIOUS WEEK.

8. IN A PRIVATE ASIDE WITH A MEMBER OF THE U.S. DELEGATION, MISTRAL SAID THAT HE HOPED THE SOVIETS ARE NOT READY TO PROCEED TOWARD A CTB WITHOUT THE CONCURRENCE OF ALL THE OTHER NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES, BUT HE FEARED THAT THEY ARE.

9. EMBASSY PARIS MAY WISH TO ADD OBSERVATIONS OR COMMENTS.
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